



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO **MANAGER'S REPORT**

DATE ISSUED: February 22, 2001 REPORT NO. 01-041

ATTENTION: Natural Resources and Culture Committee

SUBJECT: Library System – Proposed New Main Library

### SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

### BACKGROUND

A modern public library system has evolved to serve myriad functions: Popular Materials Library, where collections of current materials are maintained; Formal Education Support Center to assist students at all grade levels; Children's Learning Center, where children's natural curiosity and innate desire to learn are nurtured; Reference Library for on-site and telephone assistance to help people find the information they need; Research Library, where scholars and researchers conduct in-depth studies; Independent Learning Center to assist individuals who seek information for self improvement, job-related development, or hobbies; and Community Center, where people gather to experience cultural activities ranging from exhibitions and lectures to musical performances.

Large urban library systems, such as that in San Diego, consist of a main library and branch libraries that work together to fulfill the above functions. A branch library provides popular and convenient services to its surrounding neighborhood. A branch's ability to serve its community depends upon the strength and viability of a main library in much the same way that a banking system relies on the main bank to support the smaller branch banks.

A main library serves a unique purpose, as it is the heart of the library system. It is where one finds in-depth subject expertise, where the staff and resources are provided for specific subject

areas such as business, science, art, music and literature. Its specialists are responsible for developing comprehensive collections for the entire library system. A main library also houses materials that pertain to the collective memories of the locale, such as maps, newspapers, and historic photographs. San Diego's main library, currently the Central Library, contains more than a half-million unique titles, and holds the current and retrospective collections that are too costly to reproduce at each branch library.

The Central Library is the heart, brain and never center of our public library system. Built in 1954, it provides the centralized operating system for 33 diverse branches spread over 331 square miles. More than 700,000 patrons visit the Central Library annually. Over the years, Library collections have outgrown available space, and the current building lacks shelving capacity and room for growth. More than half of the collection has to be stored in two basement levels, closed to the public and available only upon request. The Central Library was not designed for the extensive wiring necessary for now commonplace technologies like Internet access computers and it is currently required to serve three times the number of branches as when it first opened. It has inadequate auditorium space for cultural events, and minimal space for exhibits and displays to complement and promote collections. As a thriving and growing city, San Diego deserves a first-class Main Library for its diverse population.

In June 2000, the Mayor and City Council reviewed several site alternatives and selected the Park to Bay site as the location for a proposed New Main Library. In October 2000, the City Council approved the contract with Rob Wellington Quigley, FAIA, for the schematic design. Concurrently, Library staff began working with consultants on the program for the proposed New Main Library. On January 31, 2001, a series of Natural Resources and Culture Committee meetings addressing San Diego's library system began. As one component of this ongoing review of the library system, Mr. Quigley will present the design for the proposed New Main Library at the February 28, 2001 committee meeting.

## DISCUSSION

### **Program**

Consultants were engaged by the City of San Diego to develop a detailed building program for a new main library. Program development took into account data supplied by the Library staff, including demographic and economic data, library service and program data, collection information, and information relating to the nature and activity of the San Diego community. The program planning process involved community input and participation. Additionally, the consultants met individually with various officials, and interviewed staff and branch managers. The recommended building program reflects the constraints and opportunities of the Park to Bay site, and has been accommodated in the architectural drawings prepared by Mr. Quigley.

### **Design**

A schematic design has been developed and submitted to the City by Mr. Quigley (see attached computer generated models). The design for the main library is a work in progress and there will be additional opportunities for input in the coming months. The drawings prepared to this point confirm that the site is practical and adequate for the program, budget, and functions of the City's main library. The site and the approved budget allow for an enlarged library and square footage for future library expansion space. Based upon the design, the building will have an impressive size of 390,000 square feet. During its early years of operation, library spaces will occupy the majority of the space, leaving 77,000 square feet available for future expansion as needed. In the interim, the extra space will be leased as office space, providing one source of operational funds for the new building. Library patrons will also enjoy excellent access to the site with 256 dedicated parking spaces in two levels of parking beneath the building.

This design has been developed to reflect a modern library that is as much about social interaction and intercultural exchange as the storage of books and delivery of information into the hands of individuals. The result is a simple nine-story building composed of flexible space, with top and ground floors providing diverse and accessible public amenities.

Mr. Quigley's design shows the library entrance via a two-story arcade running the length of the side fronting Park Boulevard. An entry vestibule containing the parking elevator and library gift shop allows access to the two-story lobby. The lobby will provide access to the circulation desk, and the Popular Library and Children's Library. At the south end of the lobby lies a courtyard, or "library garden", shaded by trees that is suitable for large gatherings and includes an outdoor cafe. There is also a 350-seat, sloped floor auditorium adjacent to the lobby.

The top floor will serve as a cultural venue available to all the people of San Diego. A three-story, airy reading room is shaded by the dome latticework above. A series of open terraces look down into the reading room and out to the city and bay beyond. A 400-seat multi-purpose room looks to the west and is served by a catering kitchen. An art gallery with a vaulted ceiling faces Balboa Park to the north. Completing the complex is a smaller public meeting room, suitable for use by the Library Commission and other gatherings. The rooftop resources are carefully configured so that as many as four separate functions can take place simultaneously.

The mid-level floors will provide access to the library's vast book and media collections. The subject departments included are Social Science, Business and Government Documents; Science and Magazines/Newspapers; Humanities (literature and History); Art, Music and Recreation; and Special Collections. These floors will provide additional public seating, a technology center to service patrons, and house the library's adult literacy program, Read/San Diego. Additionally, space will be provided for public service and administrative staff. The mid-level space will accommodate these important components of the library in a layout that is most convenient to library patrons.

As envisioned by Mr. Quigley, the inside/outside domed library will celebrate San Diego's climate, encourage social interaction, and serve as a cultural center for the entire region. It will be a first-class main library to serve the City's library system and the citizens of San Diego.

## **Budget**

The cash flow for the Park to Bay library site, presented to the Mayor and City Council in June 2000, indicated a project cost estimate of \$145,000,000. The schematic design submitted by Mr. Quigley included a detailed cost estimate provided by his sub-consultant, Campbell-Anderson & Associates, Inc. The total budget includes design, construction of the library and expansion space, books and furnishings, and funding for the Police Garage relocation, which is being transferred to a separate Capital Improvements Project. Value engineering ideas are being identified in an effort to reduce costs or increase the quality of the materials, electrical systems and mechanical systems.

An independent cost estimator, hired by the City Manager, has analyzed the construction estimate and verified that it is comprehensive. Previous experience and industry standards indicate that additional savings will be realized if a Design/Build service delivery method is selected. Based on a Design/Build service delivery method, the original \$145,000,000 total project budget remains adequate for the project.

## **Summary**

The New Main Library will house the resources, including collections and staff expertise that will serve as the central hub of San Diego's library system. It will support the branches located throughout the city and other area libraries, and provide access to information and knowledge critical to our knowledge-based society. This New Main Library, an important component of a successful library system in San Diego, will be a symbol of the City's commitment to learning and education.

Respectfully submitted,

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Special Projects Manager

Approved: 

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Bruce A. Herring  
Deputy City Manager

HERRING/LKC

Attachments: \*Computer-generated models

\*NOTE: Attachments are not available in electronic format. Copies of the attachments are available for review in the Office of the City Clerk, (619) 533-4000.